

# Valley Forge National Historical Park

## Business Plan

2001



## Overview of Business Plan

*The National Park Service Business Plan Initiative represents a unique partnership between the National Park Service (NPS), the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA), and a consortium of philanthropic organizations. The Initiative's purpose is to increase the financial management capabilities in park units, thus enabling the National Park Service to more clearly communicate its financial status with Congress and other primary stakeholders. Formally begun in Yellowstone National Park in 1997, the program has been implemented in 40 national parks across the country, including 13 parks participating in the summer of 2001. The business plan answers questions such as: What is the business of the park unit, How is the park spending its current resources, and What, if any, is the park's funding gap? This plan analyzes the functional responsibilities, operational standards, financial picture, and funding needs of Valley Forge National Historical Park.*



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## Executive Summary

Valley Forge National Historical Park is located in southeastern Pennsylvania and was established in 1976 to preserve, protect, and maintain the cultural and natural resources that are associated with the encampment of General George Washington's Continental Army from December 1777 to June 1778. The park receives over 7.2 million visitors annually, of which, over 5.8 million are commuters using the state roads through the park, and the rest are recreational visitors for various park purposes. The urban setting in which the park is located poses unique and complex challenges for the park while trying to achieve its mission.

In the summer of 2001, the park participated in the National Parks Business Plan Initiative (BPI), a joint effort between the National Park Service and the National Parks Conservation Association to enable parks to more clearly communicate their financial status to principal stakeholders. The highlights of the analysis are outlined below:

### Historical Financial Analysis:

- Although the park's Congressionally appropriated base budget has increased 137% in nominal terms from 1980 to 2000, real growth, after adjusting for inflation, has been only 14%.
- Personnel costs have increased 32% (in real growth) from 1991 to 2000 due to mandated changes in salary and benefits, while the base budget increased only 13% (in real growth) over the same ten years.
- Park funding over time has allowed for the gradual deterioration of park resources by not covering specialized project needs.

Visitation: Non-recreational (commuter traffic) visitation continues to rise, which puts a strain on the park's natural and cultural resources because of traffic factors such as exhaust and congestion.

### FY2000 Financial Situation: (Park operations are organized into five functional areas)

Functional Area	FY2000 Expenditures	% of Total	FTE need	Add'l Funds needed	Functional Priorities
Resource Protection	\$1,114,734	19%	10.5	\$523,579	Cultural Resource Management: Historical Architecture & Cultural Landscape, Historical Buildings Maintenance Natural Resource Management: Inventory and Monitoring
Visitor Experience and Enjoyment	\$2,303,053	38%	15.0	\$828,093	Interpretation: Interpretation and Nature Center Operations Visitor Safety Services: Law Enforcement Patrol and Loss Protection
Facility Operations	\$929,872	15%	7.5	\$355,870	Trails Operations Buildings Operations: Housing and Non-historic buildings
Maintenance	\$512,035	9%	3.4	\$166,858	Buildings Maintenance: Housing Maintenance
Management and Administration	\$1,144,466	19%	4.0	\$384,433	External Affairs Communications: Information Technology General Administration: Contracting Specialist
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$6,004,160</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>40.4</b>	<b>\$2,258,833</b>	

Investment Needs: One-time investments are needed to bring the park's preservation of its cultural and natural resources up to par with identified operational standards. The top ten investments total over \$18 million, led by the need to preserve encampment buildings.



## *Superintendent's Forward*

After 25 years of stewardship by the National Park Service, Valley Forge National Historical Park is well-used and well-loved by millions. Valley Forge may be the one place people from all over the world associate with the American Revolution. Local and international visitors alike come to learn about, and be inspired by, the events that took place here.



Valley Forge is one of 385 units of the U.S. National Park System. While small compared to large wilderness parks, it is one of the larger parks whose principal purpose is historic preservation and interpretation. The park's budget and staffing is in the top tier of national parks. Nonetheless, it is a park facing many daunting challenges, including:

- Omnipresent sights, sounds, and impacts of the 21st century intruding on attempts to preserve and interpret the 18th;
- Increasing use, especially by commuters driving through and those seeking a place for exercise and recreation;
- Increasing costs and a flat budget;
- Increasing reliance on volunteers to provide basic visitor services;
- A deteriorating infrastructure; and
- Non-native plant infestations, pollution, and other threats to the park's natural resources.

The park needs your help to craft and achieve a new vision -- to remake this place into a national attraction and economic powerhouse that the local community can be proud of. We're starting a master planning process in which the community (local, regional, and national) will identify what it wants this park to be, consistent with its proud place in the national park system, and how we can achieve that vision together. The centerpiece will be the Congressionally-authorized public-private partnership to establish a world-class museum of the American Revolution, here at Valley Forge.

This business plan is an unabashed, behind-the-scenes look into the workings of your park today, and will be essential in determining its future direction and needs. We've been honored to work with consultants from some of the nation's finest business and public policy schools, and have gained from the close partnership with the National Parks Conservation Association, which made this possible.

We welcome your comments, and participation, as we plan the park's future together.

/s/ Arthur L. Stewart